

REMARKS

Prior to this paper, claims 5, 7-9, 12-16 and 20-30 were pending. By this paper, without prejudice or disclaimer, Applicants cancel claims 7, 8, 12, 13, 20, 24, 25 and 29. Therefore, claims 5, 9, 14-16, 21-23 and 26-28 and 30 are now pending.

Applicants respectfully submit that the present application is in condition for allowance for the reasons that follow.

Objected To Claims / Indication of Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants thank Examiner Brahan for the indication that objected to claims 13 and 25 contain allowable subject matter. As may be seen above, in order to obtain swift allowance of the application, Applicants have incorporated the recitations of claim 13 into independent claim 5 (including the recitations of the intervening claim), thus effectively placing claim 13 into independent form, and also have incorporated the recitations of claim 25 into independent claim 21 (including the recitations of the intervening claim), thus effectively placing claim 25 into independent form.

Applicants respectfully submit that the above amendments overcome the objection to the claims.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 5, 7-9, 12, 14-16, 20-24 and 26-30 stand variously rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious in view of the combination of Tepman (U.S. Patent No. 6,440,261) with Slocum (U.S. Patent No. 5,854,822) and/or the combination of Komino (U.S. Patent No. 5,769,952) in view of Slocum.

In response, in order to advance prosecution, and without prejudice or disclaimer, Applicants have incorporated the recitations of claim 13 (a claim identified as containing

allowable subject matter) into independent claim 5 (including the recitations of the intervening claim), thus effectively placing claim 13 into independent form.

Also in response, again in order to advance prosecution, and without prejudice or disclaimer, Applicants have incorporated the recitations of claim 25 (a claim identified as containing allowable subject matter) into independent claim 21 (including the recitations of the intervening claim), thus effectively placing claim 25 into independent form. Applicants cancel claim 7 without prejudice or disclaimer.

In view of the above amendments, Applicants respectfully submit that the prior art rejections are now moot in view of the fact that all claims include the recitations of former claims 13 and 25, claims indicated as containing allowable subject matter. Allowance of the claims is respectfully requested.

Conclusion

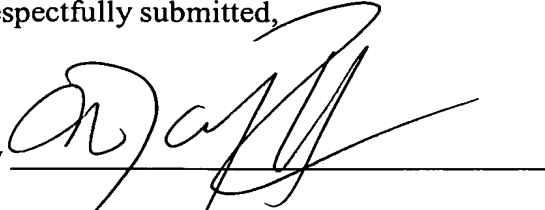
Applicants believe that the present application is in condition for allowance, and favorable reconsideration is requested.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required regarding this application under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. Should no proper payment be enclosed herewith, as by a check being in the wrong amount, unsigned, post-dated, otherwise improper or informal or even entirely missing, the Commissioner is authorized to charge the unpaid amount to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. If any extensions of time are needed for timely acceptance of papers submitted herewith, Applicant hereby petitions for such extension under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 and authorizes payment of any such extensions fees to Deposit Account No. 19-0741.

Examiner Brahan is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that a telephone interview would advance the prosecution of the present application.

Respectfully submitted,

By

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. J. Cosenza', is written over a horizontal line.

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